

Decision Ignites Protests

continued from front

carrying signs in support of gun violence victims including Brown.

When the Ferguson verdict was announced that Wilson would walk free, many of the students expressed sadness and outrage.

Sam Matz, a black student activist who sat watching the announcement, said, "I feel like it should hurt less. But every time it's devastating."

Other students expressed a futility in their demands for justice.

"I'm sad, but not surprised," said Tessara Dudley, a black writer and student. "It's like our lives don't matter, like they never mattered."

"We know justice doesn't exist, but to see the blatant lack of regard for black people on an openly public format, tells us nothing has changed," said student activist Phoenix Singer. "Different era, different rhetoric, same results."

Cornell William Brooks, national president of the NAACP, made a call Monday night for activists across the country to join them on a 120-mile, 7 day march to Missouri's capital city, entitled "Journey for Justice: Ferguson to Jefferson City."

The march is set to begin on Saturday, Nov. 29, and continue from the foot of the Canfield Green Apartments in Ferguson, where Brown was shot dead, to Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon's mansion in Jefferson City.

Portlanders who want to support

the march but cannot physically attend are welcome to donate on the NAACP's national website. Donations will go to helping the organization's efforts to promote racial justice on behalf of people of color in the United States.

President Obama also followed the announcement with a statement broadcast on live TV, asking Americans to refrain from rioting or engaging in violent protest.

"We are nation built on the rule of law," he offered. "We need to accept this was a decision that was the grand jury's to make." He later addressed the aggrieved community of Ferguson, stating, "What is also true is that there are problems and that communities of color aren't just making those problems up."

Attorney General Eric Holder managed to end the night with hope for another path to justice in the Missouri case, announcing that "the Justice Department's investigation into the shooting of Mike Brown remains ongoing." He added that "those who decide to participate in demonstrations should remember the wishes of Michael Brown's parents, who have asked that remembrances of their son be conducted peacefully."

"It does not honor his memory to engage in violence or looting. In the coming days, it will likewise be important for local law enforcement authorities to respect the rights of demonstrators, and deescalate tensions by avoiding excessive dis-

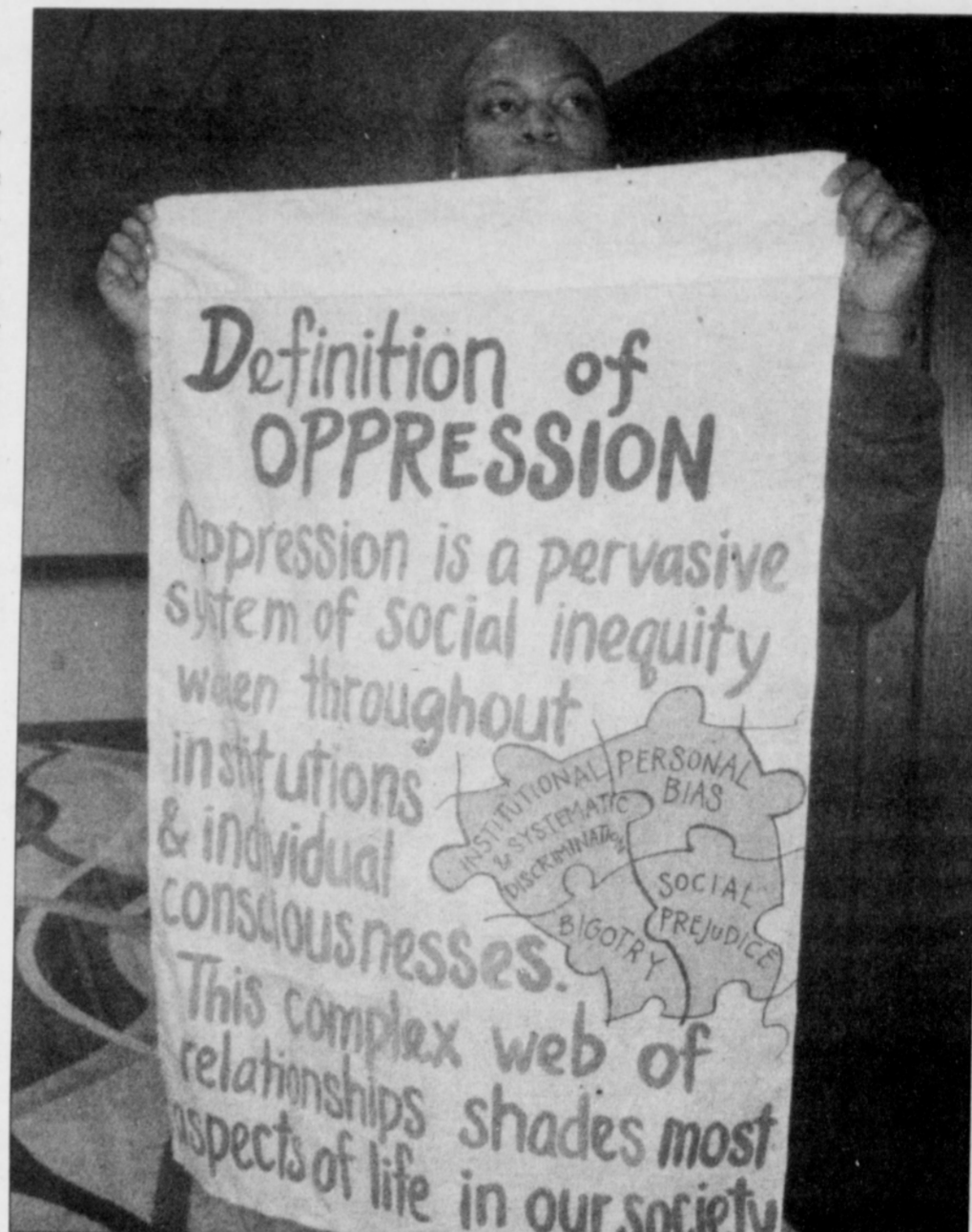


PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Dr. Derrais Carter, assistant professor of Black Studies at Portland State University, defines oppression at a rally at PSU Monday night that was organized as a call for justice in the death of Michael Brown, the unarmed teenager killed during a confrontation with police in Ferguson, Missouri.

plays—and uses—of force."

Local responses have varied as well. Rev. Dr. LeRoy Hayes Jr. of the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform said, "The failure of the grand jury

to indict Officer Wilson in this case is a travesty of justice."

"We in Portland have had many Michael Browns - Kendra James, Jahar Perez, Aaron Campbell, James Chasse - so we know how important it is to bring officers to justice when they have used excessive and deadly force," Hayes said.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales also issued a statement, acknowledging that Portland will have to accommodate its protestors.

"We are fully prepared to support the people who choose to publicly demonstrate. We will work to facilitate safety for all demonstrations," Hales said.

The mayor said Portland must also address the systemic prob-

lems of distrust that are occurring between police and people of color all across the country, including Portland.

"The situation in Ferguson did not occur in a vacuum. All of our community is hurting today. And, together, all of our community must begin healing. We, as a society, have a lot of work to do addressing the systemic inequities history has left us. We are working to address those inequities in Portland with the Black Male Achievement Initiative; SummerWorks internship program; Ban the Box; a felony-hiring incentive; and by working to build community trust in the police bureau. The city, and all our public institutions, must work to address these issues."

Audrey Terrell, president of the Portland chapter of the NAACP, called for the Portland law enforcement to take note of the civil unrest that is caused by the use of excessive and deadly force aggressed toward communities of color.

"The Portland Police Department needs to know - we will not sit and tolerate such acts of injustice on our home front. Ferguson shouldn't, and we will not either," she said.

A group of protestors in Ferguson wrote a letter to the public, and it was read aloud in solidarity at the end of the announcement at PSU by student Mariah Leewright.

The letter ends with a statement on the sorrow the Ferguson experienced in the wake of the shooting:

"Grief, even in its most righteous state, cannot last forever. No community can sustain itself this way. So we still continue to stand for progress, and stand alongside anyone who will make a personal investment in ending our grief and will take a personal stake in achieving justice. We march on with purpose. The work continues. This is not a moment but a movement. The movement lives."

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